



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Mark Newcomb, Chair
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United States Senator Cynthia Lummis
Wyoming
Russell Senate Office Building
Suite SR – 127A
Washington, DC 20510

February 24, 2025

Re: Impact on Teton County from Firing of Public Land Management Agency Employees

The Honorable Senator Cynthia Lummis:

The Teton County Board of County Commissioners writes to express our deep concern and frustration due to the recent firing of thousands of federal employees, especially the sweeping cuts to staffs of the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. These cuts negatively impact economic prosperity and quality of life in Teton County and our federal partners at the Bridger-Teton and Caribou-Targhee National Forests, Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks, and the National Elk Refuge.

Public lands in Teton County are the basis of our economic prosperity. They must be properly managed and staffed. First, we cannot compromise on public safety. Staff that have been recently fired protect public safety, improving the experience of millions of annual visitors. Second, we cannot compromise on the experience of our visitors. Recently fired staff maintain public facilities and trails; they also serve as critical touchpoints to inform visitors about how to decrease their impact, behave around wildlife, and protect the resource.

We respectfully request that you ask the Administration of President Donald Trump, Interior Secretary Doug Burgum, and Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins what they plan to do to ensure our community's safety, our visitors' enjoyment of their public lands, the health of our ecosystem, and the vitality of our economy without the work of these valued federal employees. Our community, your constituents, deserve to know; visitors to our community deserve to know; and our Board needs to understand what levels of service to expect from our federal partners. If the Administration is able to advise you about our concerns, would you please pass along to us what you learn?



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We understand that the Bridger-Teton National Forest alone, one of three Forests that overlap Teton County, will lose around twenty-five percent of its non-fire workforce. The sudden mass firings of federal employees from within our community have affected public information officers, river and wilderness rangers, recreation technicians, and trail crew workers - many of whom have red cards and are critical to wildland firefighting efforts - among others. Many of these individuals are long-standing and well-respected members of our community and are considered experts in their field of work. Staffing cuts of this magnitude have consequences that will impact bathroom cleanliness, trail safety and maintenance, wastewater treatment, visitor experience, critical life-saving information sharing, and more. The firing of those who monitor forest health and identify how best to manage diseased stands of timber to reduce wildfire risk undermines years of growing bipartisan momentum to mitigate the risk of high-cost extreme fire events.

Eliminating employees who are in a probationary period does not make our government more efficient when staffing levels are already not keeping pace with growing demands on our public lands. Grand Teton National Park saw a 22% increase in visitors from 2023. Backcountry trail use has increased 34% over the past ten years.

Tourism to Teton County generated \$1.7 billion in revenue and 7,890 tourism-related jobs in 2023. Understaffing our public land management agencies will harm local businesses and the employees who drive our economy and sustain our community.

We appreciate your time and consideration on this very important and urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Mark Newcomb, Chair
Teton County Board of County Commissioners

Attest: Maureen E. Murphy
Teton County Clerk